



Phipps, A. (2013) Intercultural ethics: questions of methods in language and intercultural communication. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 13 (1). pp. 10-26. ISSN 1470-8477

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Deposited on: 26 February 2013

# **Intercultural Ethics: Questions of Methods in Language and Intercultural Communication**

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores how questions of ethics and questions of method are intertwined and unavoidable in any serious study of language and intercultural communication. It argues that the focus on difference and solution-orientations to intercultural conflict has been a fundamental driver for theory, data collection and methods in the field. These approaches, the paper argues, have created a considerable consciousness raising industry, with methods, trainings, and ‘critical incidents,’ which ultimately focus intellectual energy in areas which may be productive in terms of courses and publications but which have a problematic basis in their ethical terrain.

Dieser Artikel untersucht wie ethische und methodische Fragen nicht nur ineinander greifen, sondern in keiner ernstzunehmenden Studie ueber Sprache und interkulturelle Kommunikation ausgelassen werden duerfen. Es wird hier argumentiert, dass der Schwerpunkt auf Verschiedenheit und Problemorientierung im interkulturellen Konflikt einen wesentlichen Einfluss auf theoretische Entwicklungen, Datenerhebung und Methoden in diesem Bereich hatte. Dieser Artikel legt auch dar, wie diese Ansaetze eine betraechtliche ‘Bewusstseinsbildungs – Branche’ erzeugt haben, mit Methoden, Trainings, und ‘kritischen Interaktionssituationen’, welche letztendlich allen intellektuellen Arbeitseifer auf Bereiche konzentriert hat, die zwar ertragreich sind in Bezug auf Kurse und Publikationen, jedoch eine problematische Grundlage im ethischen Bereich aufweisen.<sup>i</sup>

Keywords: decolonizing methods; intercultural ethics; intercultural methodology; intercultural poetics; restorative methods.

## Introducing Intercultural Ethics

From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write and choose to privilege, the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, ‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. It is so powerful that indigenous people even write poetry about research.

(Tuhiwai Smith 2012: 1)

How might good intercultural relationships be developed which do not provoke or perpetuate such statements about research? How can good intercultural language teaching and learning be fostered and how might good intercultural research take place? Who judges how good this is and against which criteria? On first reading, these questions may appear to be concerned with the functional issue of quality assurance in intercultural language education – how it is that the profession of intercultural language educators ensures that standards are in place and benchmarks are attained, that the research undertaken is done in a satisfactory manner. Much energy has been spent in recent years on such questions of quality and the development of frameworks for intercultural language education. In Europe the Common European Framework of Reference has given a set of standards and approaches to intercultural language pedagogy which have found resonance worldwide (Byram & Parmenter 2012). Similarly, in a variety of national and international research contexts sets of standards have been elaborated with regard to the good conduct of empirical research with human subjects. This work has unfolded in national settings and in accordance with national laws and policies regarding the nature of research and education. The questions of good intercultural relationships, language pedagogy and good intercultural research are also questions of ethics, pertaining to what constitutes just relationships, what might be virtues in the conduct of intercultural research, how teaching might be done in such a way as to enable human flourishing, restorative research relationships and where research is not one of the ‘dirtiest of words’ and the experience lends itself to a different kind of poetics altogether.

Classical literature provides an initial starting point for their discussion, most notably Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. It is in this classical, even founding text, of philosophical ethics that we find interconnections between aesthetics and ethics. Aristotle points out that the things “that are beautiful and just, about which politics investigates, involve great disagreement and inconsistency, so that

they are thought to belong only to convention and not to nature”. (Aristotle 2002: 2). 'Things that are beautiful and just' are grouped together here creating an implicit relationship between what is deemed to be aesthetically pleasing and what is understood as ethical. The question of ethics cannot be uncoupled from the aesthetics and symbols of the actions in question. For Aristotle this relationship is not described as one between two discrete abstracts but rather as a method, “all making, investigating (every methodos, like the Ethics itself), all deliberate actions and choice, all aim at some good. [...] there is one highest aim, happiness.” Ethics, here, are deliberate actions, makings, methods. It is not so much a state or imposition as a common process of becoming and creating.

In this paper I wish to explore the relationship between ethics and aesthetics as it has developed in language and intercultural communication and to consider what bearing this relationship has for decolonizing research methods in the field. In an important article in this journal in 2009, Holliday discusses the “connection between Centre dominance and the need for professionals and academics to assert their status through the defining of speakerhood, culture and language within purportedly neutral technical or scientific categories”. Holliday argues that:

This is not an evil plot to dominate the world \_ just a modernist attempt to rationalise and make things work. However, even within the cosmopolitanism of new thinking it is hard to move on from these powerful devices for advancing practice and knowledge. The solution seems not to lie within the sensitising and liberalising of Centre thinking, but with a cessation of the zealous defining and fixing of others in order to allow spaces for the margins to become visible. (Holliday 2009: 153)

Following on from Holliday’s conclusions this paper is concerned with the question of how it is that research methods in language and intercultural communication can rise to the considerable challenge of ‘ceasing their zealous defining and fixing of others in order to allow spaces for the margins to become visible.’ For me, this is centrally a question of intercultural ethics and aesthetics in the practice of research. In order to address this aspect of research in language and intercultural communication I first trace ethical concerns in the field. I then examine deconstructivist critiques of the field and of the assumed ethical positions moving to consider the possibility of intercultural ethics in research methods which allow spaces for the margins to become visible in ways which trace Aristotle’s view of ethics as inherently linked to aesthetics.

### **Tracing an ethics of awareness in language and intercultural communication**

The field of Language and Intercultural Communication as a critical endeavour developed, in part,

out of the cross-cultural capability conferences held in Leeds in the mid-late 1990s. It offered a theoretical and conceptual space for the development of critical, postcolonial approaches to questions of language and intercultural communication. The concept of ‘capability’ grew out of Sen and Nussbaum’s work on human development (Nussbaum & Sen 1993) and was seen to offer a broader development than competency based models, then in the ascendancy. In the early conferences of the International Association of Languages and Intercultural Communication a critical strand of work relating to ethics was been discernible in both theoretical debates and with respect to methods of language pedagogy (Killick, Parry, & Phipps 2001a; Killick, Parry, & Phipps 2001b; Thurlow 2002).

Some of this work built on paradigms of critical pedagogy, notably those of Paulo Freire (Freire 1970) and Henry Giroux (Giroux 1988; Giroux 1992), to develop a conceptual ethics for intercultural education, which could trace roots back to the liberatory movements of the 1960s and 1970s and which was influenced by struggles against apartheid in South Africa and U.S. Civil Rights movements. The intercultural ethics in play concerned activism in the face of injustice and prejudice, incorporation of postcolonial critiques, and teaching and learning intercultural communication and intercultural communicative competence in such a way as to engender considered action and engagement in specific issues of human development. Focus was on theory, largely from poststructuralist and critical humanist paradigms, and on methods for language teaching, in particular communicative methods and critiques therefore (For a full review see (Kumaravadivelu 2006). What was deemed to be ‘good’ was what was liberatory, in a democratic and political sense, and what worked to foster awareness in the increasingly intercultural language classrooms of Europe. This work took intercultural language education beyond communicative methods, critical incidents and tolerance or awareness, or even empathy, to an engaged pedagogy of intercultural action in ethical and political matters. In this, intercultural language research shared common cause with postcolonial studies and other critical movements in the humanities and social scientific research.

Of significance in this critical strand of work is the work of Gavin Jack (Jack 2009; Jack & Lorbiecki 2003). Jack proposed a Foucaultian discursive approach from a position of critique of management ethics of profitability. Through analyses of labour markets and globalisation Jack demonstrates the extent of the ethical divides between intercultural managers and intercultural labourers in a variety of contexts. The ethical assumption in the work of these scholars was that intercultural communication and work towards its realisation should proceed along lines of

democracy and equality and that these were often incompatible with dominant economic rationale or systems of global corporate governance. Others also laid foundations for an intercultural identity ethic at this time, notably Crawshaw (Crawshaw, Callen, & Tusting 2001) through his work on identity, 'Ipseite' and Ricoeur, and Parry (Parry 2003), and her Bergsonian humanist stance which considered the place of the arts and creativity in the work of intercultural language education and identity formation. In more recent years these critical and engaged perspectives have been enhanced by postcolonial and occidental studies, notably in the work of Nair Venugopal (Nair Venugopal 2009;Nair Venugopal 2012) and Adejunmobi (Adejunmobi 2004).

Creativity and poetics as aesthetic concerns were brought into dialogue with social scientific data on intercultural language education and a plurality of methodological experimentation in language and intercultural research is represented in the proceedings of the early conferences, which provided the foundation for this journal. (Byram, Nichols, & Stevens 2001;Cronin 2002;Killick, Parry, & Phipps 2001a;Killick, Parry, & Phipps 2001b;Parry 2003). The work of literary authors from postcolonial contexts was a feature of the attempts, unsystematic and experimental as they were in the conferences, to open a space for narrative and for data to speak from beyond the confines of the forms defined by the research interview and the notion of the 'informant', the tape recorder or the codifications in NVivo or SPS. Poetry, drama, visual media, and biography and autobiography were found in the conference proceedings in a moment of critical possibility and openness, facilitated by the conference chairs, Margaret Parry and David Killick, which fostered such exploration (Cormeraie, Parry, & Killick 2000). This work stood as its own poetic redress to the dominant social scientific methods at work in the various subfields of language and intercultural research. It did not claim to advance its own methodologies for research but rather to act as a site for research in and of itself. From this work came studies of the intercultural narrative and of literary translation as a locus for the analysis of the intercultural imagination (Crawshaw, Callen, & Tusting 2001;Cronin 2000).

At the same time as these theoretical and ethical concerns were emerging in the field a large body of work on practical instances of classroom solutions to awareness raising were being developed, where awareness acted as an ethical imperative. Through all of this work is the assumption that intercultural encounter brings possibilities but also creates problems and conflict and that awareness raising is the key to conflict prevention, with some of this material aiming at engaging controversial issues or aspects of social life. In the UK, increasingly language classroom practice was being shaped through ethnographic and experiential critical models of learning and students work was

brought to the fore in papers which suggested the cycles of experience and reflection were successful in raising awareness of intercultural matters (Corbett 2003;Corbett 2010;Roberts et al. 2001). There was a rich description in the work of this time of classrooms alight with awareness and exploration of intercultural issues and their place in language pedagogy. Early work in the series Languages for Intercultural Communication and Education, published by Multilingual Matters, showcased examples of this work, notably in *Developing Intercultural Communication in Practice* (Byram, Nichols, & Stevens 2001), which have now become mainstream in the teaching of intercultural language pedagogy in the UK. These offer instances of the kinds of 'postmethod pedagogy' discussed at length by Kumaravadivelu (Kumaravadivelu 2001;Kumaravadivelu 2012a;Kumaravadivelu 2012b) though the dominance of communicative models of language pedagogy has yet to be challenged or to be seen as practical in contexts of the global south outwith the central concerns of liberal democratic models of critical pedagogy (Akbari 2008).

In more recent years work on ethics has come in the form of concepts of 'intercultural responsibility' and through Guilherme's leadership of the ICOPROMO and INTERACT projects (Guilherme, Glaser, & Mendez-Garcia 2010). Both these projects afforded the opportunity to gather empirical data which would enable training and interaction in intercultural responsibility as one strand of the research projects. Intercultural responsibility is an important development as it offers a framework of voice, global ethics and solidarity which work within conceptualisation and critiques of globalisation, democracy and human rights. This work is influence by Ting Toomey's interpersonal and individualised models of intercultural communication which propose mindfulness and consciousness levels as the ground upon which attitudes may be changed and responsibility assumed (Ting Toomey 1999). To this we might add the work of Holmes on dialogical ethics and interfaith discourse (Holmes 2011) and Byram (Byram 2008b), also Starkey's (Starkey 2007)-later work on citizenship and human rights which also works with notions of intercultural citizenship, cosmopolitanism and tolerance. In this work we see scholars based in Europe and North America grappling with the critiques and limits of modernist Human Rights discourse and of the challenges brought by the dominant political concerns with security in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. To this we might add the work of Dervin (Dervin 2012: forthcoming) and his discussion of the need for interculturally competent researchers who seriously research with rather than on their subjects. Together with many other contributions too numerous to list here, we see the emergence of a critical discourse which has emerged during this period to challenge the dominant hegemony of English language scholarship and English language conceptual dominance – though not quite taking the path of Ngugi wa' Thiong'i (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986), especially in his Kikuyu

writings, or Máirín nic Eoinn's *Trén bhFearann Breac* (nic Eoinn 2005) in her commitment to Irish scholarship in Irish, both examples of scholars exploring the research life of their mother tongues.

### **Two Aporias: Debating the Theoretical Basis for Ethics in LAIC**

At work in much of the development of intercultural language research has been what Macdonald and O'Regan (Macdonald & O'Regan 2012) carefully excavate and identify as two aporias. Firstly they identify "an unstated impetus towards a universal consciousness;- assumed as universally given." As such the work of the late 1990s reflected the possibilities of largely North American, Australasian and European scholars, engaging in this strand of work at the time, to enjoy degrees of freedom of expression and intercultural engagement not shared universally worldwide, yet aspired to from within liberal, democratic societies and promoted by the methods of teaching and of research available to such scholars. It is true that such labour, in terms of teaching and research, is something of a luxury and requires certain conditions of security and material possibility to be formulated (Bourdieu 2000). Critics go as far as seeing such thinking as potentially imperial, exclusive and unethical in their then lack of incorporation of perspectives from the global south in particular, and in languages outwith the European Centre of French, German, English. The verdict: could do better; try harder; learn more languages; listen; do intercultural research according to the values and 'competences' of intercultural education (Dervin 2012).

Secondly, their argument demonstrates how the truth claims of much of intercultural communication discourse are grounded in an 'implicit appeal to a transcendental moral signified' In short, what Macdonald and O'Regan demonstrate in their important article is the way the aims and objectives of intercultural curricular and materials aim at presuming an implicit ethic of awareness as universally held and tending towards universalising solutions in either critical transformation or pragmatic solution, through its "metaphysics of presence". They also show the extent to which this consciousness is a presumed ethic of intercultural awareness, moving towards notions of harmony, tolerance, citizenship and democracy, which are assumed universals of human rights, and presented as unproblematically given and shared. In short they characterise a situation ripe for renewed critical engagement.

Developing their own ethical engagement through the work of Derrida and Levinas (op. cit) Macdonald and O'Regan (Macdonald & O'Regan 2012) show how multiple selves, presences and others problematise transformational discourse and the assumption of difference as static or as overcome through intercultural work. They ask: "To what extent can a critical transformational discourse refuse to engage in a transformational dialogue with these others; and closely related to



this, on what ethical grounds might it assert preference for its claims over the claims of these others?" (5).

Macdonald and O'Regan's work echoes an early contribution to the field by Peter Cryle (Cryle 2002) in 2002. In this piece; 'Should we stop worrying about cultural awareness?' Cryle identifies a 'prestige of theories of consciousness' in which he sees a danger that scholars in the field of intercultural studies "will be caught up indefinitely with intriguing, yet unproductive questions" and asks "whether the notional of cultural awareness deserves our full attention, and our enduring professional commitment?" (24).

An example of precisely this colonizing prestige of consciousness in action, from the field of anthropology, is exemplified by the work of Lila Abu-Lughod (Abu-Lughod 2002) in her article 'Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? The veil; cultural relativism and the rhetoric of salvations.' This article enacts precisely the same concerns regarding the prestige of consciousness and of the dual aporias identified by Macdonald and O'Regan. Abu-Lughod complains of the way western feminism tends to construct veiling as a problematic practice of difference which should not be accepted but overcome, and from which Muslim women need 'saving.' Her conclusions regarding veiling are similar to those of Macdonald and O'Regan and enact a structure of respect which allows for different even incompatible understandings of identity, difference, practice of faith to co-exist.

"What I am advocating is the hard work involved in recognizing and respecting differences-precisely as products of different histories, as expressions of different circumstances, and as manifestations of differently structured desires. We may want justice for women, but can we accept that there might be different ideas about justice and that different women might want, or choose, different futures from what we envision as best (see Ong 1988)? We must consider that they might be called to personhood, so to speak, in a different language.

Could we not leave veils and vocations of saving others behind and instead train our sights on ways to make the world a more just place? " (Abu-Lughod 2002: 789)

Cryle and Abu-Lughod are both concerned with the way intercultural and critical studies appear to have a knack for creating unproductive questions and side stepping questions of engagement and justice. A 'good' life, in Aristotle's aesthetic and ethical terms, may be a life as a Muslim woman as one of a variety of identities. Visible, aural, tangible differences jolt the senses but this jolting does not require an education programme in awareness or a critical campaign to transform. However complex these discussions are and however many views it is clear that traditional prestige

assumptions or methods of eliciting opinions are woefully inadequate when judged ethically. Instead, there is a different, ethical-political task which emerges which is far more consonant with the methods which indigenous and critical intercultural researchers have adopted in recent years: the practice of listening, naming, reclaiming, co-creating, participating, sharing. Such practices are carefully rooted in relationships and forms of relating which require receiving the other in their personhood and with their habitation practices as they are.

It is therefore to a theory of methods that I wish to turn in order to suggest a way out of the dual theoretical aporias identified cogently by Macdonald and O'Regan.

### **Questions of Research Methods**

The work reviewed above advances the early ethical propositions in the field and charts their development from the Marxist and modernist frameworks of the early 1990s into a poststructuralist and globalised conceptualisation. This said, there is an assumption in this work that ethical intercultural relationships occur at the level of consciousness, awareness raising and of concepts such as democracy and tolerance and citizenship. The classroom approaches emerging under these framings of ethics in intercultural language pedagogy involve expanded teaching and training modules, action at the level of each individual learner through the development of portfolios of evidence of changed and transformed attitudes and through the move to create a range of standards for intercultural competence, which included the work on the U.K. National Occupation Standards in Intercultural Working. (Lund & O'Regan 2010; MacDonald, O'Regan, & Witana 2009). They represent, what Kumaravadivelu (Kumaravadivelu 2001) terms 'postmethod pedagogy' – a pedagogy focusing not so much on a universal method of communicative language teaching, but on which has seen:

[an] overarching transition in terms of three principal and perceptible shifts: (a) from communicative language teaching to taskbased language teaching, (b) from method-based pedagogy to postmethod pedagogy, and (c) from systemic discovery to critical discourse.

(Kumaravadivelu 2006: 60)

These aspects of postmethod pedagogy present themselves as curricular facets of globalisation and internationalisation, preparing teachers and students to engage in a co-constructive, decentering and critical way with people who are not the same in terms of class or ethnicity or linguistic background or nationally as a result of the transnational movement of labour, people and capital that have come

with what Bauman (Bauman 2000) terms 'liquid modernity' and Pennycook (Pennycook 2007), following Appadurai (Appadurai 1996) refers to as 'global flows'. In order to engage with liquid modernity certain ethical and political theoretical and pedagogic approaches are clearly required which will enable negotiation of contradictory elements.

Whilst considerable advances have been made towards the development of co-productive, exploratory, postmethod pedagogies and ways of enabling learners and teachers to engage with the dynamic, complexity and uncertain nature of intercultural language education in the twenty-first century, there has been limited discussion of using such ethical values in the use of intercultural research methods or of decolonizing methodologies in Language and Intercultural Communication. As Holliday notes such approaches are not readily present in the social scientific methodologies which have dominated the fields of applied linguistics and intercultural education over the past decades:

There is a profound methodological issue here. A non-critical, post-positivist sociology has for too long carried out research which is led by researcher-generated questions in interviews and questionnaires, and has not made room for people who are being researched to express their own agendas. Decentred research methodologies need to allow critical spaces in which the unexpected can emerge, and the narratives of subjects can take on a life of their own (Holliday, 2004/2006, 2007, p. 93). It is perhaps too uncannily obvious that researchers should restrain themselves as far as is possible from imposing their own agendas on what their subjects tell them. (Holliday 2009, p147).

It is my contention in this paper that whilst ethical questions have been brought to bear on theoretical and practical issues of research and of intercultural language pedagogy, there has yet to be a concomitant, creative exploration of decolonizing research methods in the field. In this journal, to take the example to hand, though this is by no means exceptional, papers fall between the theoretical discussion of weighty ethical issues and those driven by data gained and codified according to the normative assumptions of social scientific method. In all of these discussions, where critical questions of language teaching methods and postmethods were in development, no critical attention was paid to the methods used to gain the data, usually extractive in nature, which supported the work. This raises particular questions for research in the field.

Were such methods decolonizing and restorative in their approach, did they work towards a

decentering of the researcher? Did they explore a plurality of literature in other languages and advance suggestions as to how this might be achieved and conform to varying ethical codes of practice at institutional and international level? Did the research advance approaches which were co-productive, working post-hypothesis rather than to a hypothesis? Were creative methods in play, using narrative, oral history, multimedia, biography, sensory ethnography (Pink 2009) and doing so according to participatory action research principles (research 'with' not 'on') which would allow marginalised perspectives to be formally setting the agenda for the research? Were aesthetic forms brought in to focus and aesthetic questions posed of the data, the mode of research, the participation? How was the research good, just, beautiful, even, and how were such subjective criteria brought into contact with the value laden normative demands for linear analysis, codification and systematic presentation of data? I ask these questions as they pertain to important ethical concerns in the posing of research questions, the designing of research, the gathering of research data and the analysis of this data.

The questionnaire, interview or even the ethnographic observation may indeed proceed in an intercultural language field according to the ethical norms for gathering data and may even attempt to work to participatory principles. Surely if intercultural language research is to be truly intercultural in its ethics and aesthetics it needs to find creative ways for opening up a space where the subaltern cannot just speak (Spivak 1999) but where the principles of ethical research dialogue can be formed and framed in such ways as to accord space for researcher and researched, subaltern and dominant researcher to create together and to continuously negotiate the meanings and dynamics and the potential for aesthetic resonance of their speech such that the speech and speakerhoods may debate, dialogue, translate, interpret and chorus their understandings and hopes for their particular intercultural world. What are the limits and the possibilities for ethical, genuinely co-created research in systems of higher education and teaching which reward research in performative terms and foster conservative approaches to research methodology through the practice of peer review and citation indices.

Posing such ethical questions of intercultural language research methods is not dissimilar to identifying dual aporias in the universalising theoretical assumptions of language and intercultural communication or identifying the shifts in learning and teaching methodology in pragmatic terms which have accompanied the societal needs for languages, as Byram and Kumaravadivelu have done in their respective fields during the time frame under review in this paper (Byram 2000; Byram 2008a; Byram & Feng 2006; Byram & Fleming 1998; Byram, Nichols, & Stevens 2001; Byram 1997; Kumaravadivelu 2012b). It does, however, leave the onus on the author to suggest a track for

exploring possibilities in methodological terms for the field.

### **Towards Ethical Intercultural Research Methods**

My own methods for intercultural research have long developed within the guidance of the Association for Social Anthropology, which is linked to sister organisations worldwide. I have proceeded with increasing belief in participatory, co-productive and co-designed research which reflected my ever widening experience of working in multilingual and intercultural contexts with asylum seekers and refugees. I have subjected my own position to intense scrutiny and usually not liked what I found. It has also taken me into places of considerable ontological risk (Phipps 2012: forthcoming) The more I have supervised students the more I have become aware of the gulf between three key poles of research: i) the normative nature of methods taught (qualitative; interviews as a default for qualitative research) and their compliance with a range of institutional codes all ensuring ‘methodological hygiene’ – to borrow Deborah Cameron’s phrase (Cameron 1995); ii) the intercultural subject in all its complexity as colonial, hybrid and decolonizing subject; iii) the increasingly legalistic frameworks at work in ethics committees and the recourse to laws on data protection and intellectual property, which force and reward normative methodologies – peer review, ethics committees, promotions, funding bodies, research assessment regimes (Strathern 2000).

What the interactions have produced between these different strictures is often bizarre and to my mind unethical and potentially closes down spaces for genuine co-creative work. It creates a context in which research methods continue to be extractive, often uncritically imposed, and damaging in ways which are entirely avoidable if decolonizing and restorative ethical design is the norm in the critical reflective practice of holistic research design, and if it is recognised as such institutionally. The ethics forms at my own institution are a case in point. I am required to give a date for the destruction of data. I have been working with refugees and we have been sharing common stories of home. These stories are precious to us. It would be wrong and harmful for me to enact a second destruction of home, for the sake of a tick on a box on a form. The idea, for example, of using an interview schedule or a questionnaire, of plonking a tape recorder on a table, explaining the place of a consent form and asking for a signature, whilst also asking for photographs, enacts bureaucratic procedures well documented by scholars of colonialism (Anderson 1991; Pratt 2008), which centre the researcher in a nexus of legislation and protection and which tamper from the outset with the nature of the research relationship and use various strategies to mask the power relations in play. Yet such procedures are now the ‘accepted ‘ethical’ norm’ in the training of students to undertake research in intercultural settings.

Standardized, extractive methods were not created for complex, postmodern, postcolonial or even simple intercultural situations, but for work under modernist paradigms of knowledge and central control. They too partake of the dual aporias identified by MacDonald and O'Regan (2012, forthcoming) enacting a similar belief in transcendence and a similar belief in the universal value of either qualitative or quantitative approaches to data 'extraction', 'mining'; or to critical theorising as a responsive solution. In addition, they work along the lines Cryle (op cit) identified as 'unproductive', by using methods where awareness raising is both a technique (informed consent) and an end result (changed policy / social impact). This nexus of standard legalistic procedures, assumed methods and aporias leads to a situation where textures of intercultural life are missing. According to Law these textures include:

Pains and pleasures, hopes and horrors, intuitions and apprehensions, losses and redemptions, mundanities and visions, angels and demons, things that slip and slide, or appear and disappear, change shape or don't have much form at all, unpredictabilities, these are just some of the phenomena that are hardly caught by social sciences methods. (Law 2004: 2)

The situation identified by Tuhiwai Smith (Tuhiwai Smith 2012), Macdonald and O'Regan (Macdonald & O'Regan 2012), Firth and Wagner (Firth & Wagner 1997; Firth & Wagner 2007), Cryle (Cryle 2002) and Young (Young 1996), amongst others is rather bleak and leaves the researcher somewhat hung out to dry, when it comes to developing a practice of intercultural ethics. The theory and critique may be in place, but the complex situation of creative, decolonizing research is compounded by ethical procedures, methods courses in social sciences and extractive approaches to data gathering make it difficult to proceed. It leaves the question open as to what methods might be suggested for decolonizing, ethical intercultural research. Elaborating this fully is clearly beyond the scope of this particular discussion, and marks a new direction in intercultural language scholarship, requiring far more attention than this one article can achieve. In conclusion, however, I would like to make some initial, tentative suggestions.

Intercultural methods, which we engage to develop and refine intercultural and language pedagogies, need to proceed with a certain naiveté and at one and the same time with a critical commitment to ethical, decolonizing practice. The critical principles of *Language and Intercultural Communication*'s own statement of mission mean that a move towards exploring a critical integrity of methodology is long overdue.

The work of Tuhiwai Smith (Tuhiwai Smith 2012) is exemplary in this regard, articulating an agenda for research which can transcend the imperialising projects of the past and enable redress. She itemises twenty five actions for enabling research with colonized and indigenous people's which is of real significance to the aims of any truly, holistic and critical study of language and intercultural relations. It draws deeply on legal frameworks which have been hard won but which project the idea of the commons, which challenge simplistic and individual notions of intellectual property. For many indigenous peoples 'research' is a term which has brought near annihilation. Intercultural research – without sustained, careful, collaborative listening and co-construction of its research - risks becoming equally feared and compromised under the normative pressure of research methods conventions. There are ways for us to proceed, worked out collaboratively in the very institutions and agendas most damaged by such methods. Working with those organisations, scholars and communities who have noted their complicity and drawn up guidelines, collaboratively, to support future methodological work. Tuhiwai Smith refers to these as follows:

In the New Zealand context research ethics for Maori Communities extend far beyond issues of individual consent and confidentiality. In a discussion of what may constitute sound ethical principles for research in Maori communities Ngahuia Te Awekotuku had identified a set of responsibilities which researchers have to Maori people. Her framework is based on the code of conduct for the New Zealand Association of Social Anthropologists [...].(Tuhiwai Smith 2012: 119).

Developing a skill in decolonizing research methodologies, which actively work to foster trust, relationship, empathy, and co-production with and in languages, and within intercultural relationships requires, I believe, a fresh approach and a political challenge by critical researchers to the hegemony of dominant social science methodologies. It will mean learning from centres where such research methods have been tested and developed, and from institutions which have examined the nature of the 'occidental gaze' (see Nair-Venugopal 2012). such as the Institute for Occidental Studies (IKON), Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia, host to the first IALIC conference in Asia. It will mean working with humility and an aesthetic openness to different forms. Researchers attempting to work in these ways are not likely to have it easy, given the vested interests of methodological norms, especially in the social and medical sciences. A degree of artistry will be necessary which emerges from encounter and is an outcome of co-design and co-production.

From what Ricoeur terms 'first' naiveté there is the possibility of moving towards 'second naiveté', (Ricoeur 1967), where we develop a 'symbolic competence'; (Kramsch 2006) and integrate critical

and interpretative elements with a certain artistry, or poetics. Symbolic competence allows for openness in interpretation and critical work whilst also making space for others involved in the whole research process to bring their own interpretations to bear.

With this methodological artistry human beings can accommodate incredulity, conflict or impasse, rather than resolving them one way or another. A naiveté of assumption and a naiveté of direction is in play. Intercultural methods need to be appropriate to the circumstances and context and therefore require initial ‘first’, credulous naiveté as their opening stance. “I do not know how you live your life, what you assume, what practices you have learned and evolved, but I assume that you have ‘named your world’”, as Freire terms this (Freire 1970). Already this differs from the opening stance involved in standard requests (this is one I received recently from a student): “As part of the research, I’m conducting ‘key informant’ interviews with people who may have particular insights into the issues and outlooks on account of their experience. If you are willing to act as a key informant, this would involve being interviewed by me by Skype for 45-60 minutes. The interview will be fairly open.” An open invitation to listen and follow not where the researchers’ hypothesis is leading so much as to developed shared views of ‘data’, shared interpretive strategies, to co-write research and to drop the inappropriate discourse of ‘interviews’ and ‘informants’ and ‘semi-structured.’

Each research situation is unique and uniquely intercultural as well as uniquely marked linguistically and discursively. It has its own form and processes of embodiment which change through an encounters with others, through habituation and over time (Fabian 1983;Ingold 2011). Methods which enable this dynamic to be present and emerge include methods of participatory action research, where questions and problems are co-constructed and address needs present in the field of practice. Whilst there is a risk of implicit transcendence, I believe there is also an untapped scope in restorative methods for intercultural research. Where conflict has occurred or where methods may unwittingly harm, where groups investigated have a certain vulnerability, using methods which have a restorative effect, which can follow trajectories of trauma healing or which may be able to enable repair through representation and creative practice have much to recommend them. This may also be where Aristotlean ethics, connecting ethics to aesthetics (second naiveté, symbols, poetics, artistry) come together, enabling other media or other languages and places to be working, gathering, creating modes which generate new forms for representation.

Oral histories, memory, archiving, collecting and displaying can all contribute to giving renewed and different definition to individual experiences or collective histories. Intercultural research



methods which are adept at creating opportunities for such restorative work, and reflecting on the findings have an implicit ethical basis and ability to move beyond situations of pain or conflict. Again, care is needed for such work not to proceed too quickly on trajectories of 'salvation' such as those identified by Abu-Luhgod (op cit). To these may be added a range of methods from the arts and humanities: Creative methods – intercultural 'makings' – art and poetry (Heaney 1995; Heaney 1998; Heidegger 1971; Phipps & Saunders 2009), narrative and drama (Baraldi 2006; Byram & Fleming 1998; Kohler Riessmann 2008; Speedy 2008), legislative theatre and devising all offer scope for engaging methods which are sensory, embodied and which do not simply rely on verbal or textual data gathering in the form of transcripts or questionnaires (Boal 2000; Boal 1998). These methods have their place, but not in fine grained intercultural research, and if the prestige of consciousness is to be avoided then methods which rely on the collection of consciousness will also need to be avoided. Narrative inquiry is able to work with a 'breach' and with events, incidents, memories drawing them in to the particular and the universal and opening a space for a different kind of reflection which engages the imagination in artistry. The flattened, coded tones of transcripts, with their numbered rows are divorced from the highly storied, narratively and performatively rich contexts of intercultural communication. If data gathering is to proceed in the ways I sketch above, then there need to be concomitant changes in the modes of its presentation; forms which go beyond the coded transcript, the data table, the quotation and into other media. A fundamental, creative and tentative exploration of different approaches to research is required for this field, such as has emerged in others.

To these methods come those already in use in intercultural research, under the critical sanction of research ethics codes which have been elaborated with indigenous peoples: those of ethnography, participant observation and experiential learning, as documented by Roberts et al in *Language Learners as Ethnographers* (Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street 2001). This strand of research is currently developing in co-productive ways, not just to include autoethnography, but also with visual methods and sensory ethnography (Pink 2009). These emerge as a highly productive way of collecting, analysing and reflecting on the visceral dimensions of human life which Law calls for in his study of methods in the social sciences (Law 2004; Law & Mol 2002). Following de Certeau (de Certeau 1984) and Ingold and Vergunst's work in Anthropology (Ingold & Vergunst 2008), Woitsch demonstrates how productive and compelling such sensory methods can be in her 'intercultural walks' (Woitsch 2011). In this work she invites her language student participants not to an interview, but to take her on a walk and show her significant sights, and to take photographs of the things that have stood out for them as significant. Here we see a method in action which is not based on deficit, does not assume what will be found, or judge the items and places, but works in a

mode of exploration and embodiment, to allow a flow of action, impressions, natural conversation, showing and relationship. The researcher in Woitsch's work accompanies aspects of intercultural life and allows the form they take to be the form participants chose for representation and in which they are collected: aesthetic, sensory and with performed artistry. The research is quite literally walked, not worked. The difference she finds has implications for her own practice and those she researches with, where something lovely is made together which would not have been made without the research practices; something which is restorative and valued beyond an 'interview'. The changed discourse is unsettling, - the abandonment of words like data, interview, informant in favour of poetic metaphors of 'walks'; 'footprints', but it represents an attempt at a decolonizing methodology in intercultural language research.

Language pedagogy needs emotions, wonder, awe, and magic. These elements are the essence of why people travel and move towards unfamiliar worlds with the help of unfamiliar languages, when their travel is freely chosen and not under duress. Language pedagogy too often leaves this colourful mixture of discovery and learning behind and creates an understanding of language learning as something technical and instrumental, disconnected from 'the world out there'. [...] there is more about intercultural language learning than competences, functionalities and outcomes. Instead we may find narratives and experiences in between failure and success with magical as well as highly unsettling touches, which, I argue, are the very essence of what is needed to re-enchant the understanding of intercultural language learning. (Woitsch 2011:237-8)

## **Conclusion**

A final note of caution is perhaps required which allows for intercultural practice to continue without risking the paralysis of critique or the fear of harm, or worse, the cultural relativity that misapplied notions of respect can engender in the face of what are identified as cultural habits or norms. There are harmful practices in this world which have the weight of power, prestige, patriarchy and habit behind them, to keep them in place and to force them, often violently, to remain the practices they are. Education can be a source for loosening such habits, as the arts, and their hold as has been repeatedly demonstrated by the education of women worldwide, and the urgency with which this needs to be addressed. It is 'culturally normal' for countries like my own to possess and threaten the use of weapons of mass destruction even though their possession and threatened use violates international law. It is culturally 'normal' to adopt apathy and a belief that nothing will be changed by a small change in practices of, for instance, consumption (a switch to ethical or fair trade, the boycott of certain goods for countries involved in brutal occupation or oppression). It is also common to find scientific 'objectivity' or 'neutrality' as a guise for inactivity and

disengagement (Eagleton 2003).

Intercultural ethics and methods are never 'neutral', or 'objective' as such, and poststructuralism has revealed the fallacy of such assumed positions of neutrality. No method is in and of itself neutral or objective, particular not a decolonizing one. It is a truism, but not to advocate change where harm is involved is a political act and requires both advocacy and as often as not an engagement with the flawed but best institutions we have of law and politics. Intercultural methods and ethics need to be able to apply their findings in these contexts, with poise, subtlety, considerable and artistry, so that students and other actors are well formed in their habits of engagement with civil society and its instruments, with religious instruments and their power to form and control and free, with the law and politics with their ability to carefully and with measured consciousness and balance, to bring the kinds of justice which are the foundation of healing, reconciliation and justice.

This is the territory Gillian Rose claims for philosophy in her difficult but brilliant work; *The Broken Middle* (Gillian Rose 1992). Writing at the height of postmodernity's quest to free ethics from human institutions of law, civil society, government, family and religion, and to romanticise notions of self, community, and Freedom, Rose argues not for the 'diremption', - the forcible separation - of law from ethics, but of their muddled togetherness and mutual necessity.

Perhaps, then, intercultural methods can proceed through certain commitments, worked out and articulated by researchers, but open to revision and reflection, as is the nature of academic dialogue. Maybe there is a danger of a universalising or a transcendental element creeping in but perhaps there is a greater danger if a purity of political consciousness, or a false adherence to 'neutrality', is sought which eschews artistry or craft. Perhaps it is through 'second naiveté' that intercultural ethics can commit to methods which may enable the seeking of justice and equality in relationships. This would take the field beyond the 'dirtiest of words': research' and towards an embrace of complexity and open-endedness; engagement with what is known or believed to be restorative, collaborative, participatory, sensory, even healing; to allowing for methodological creativity and artistry, which moves towards shaping an intercultural poetics.

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<sup>i</sup> My thanks to Katja Frimberger for assisting with the German translation.